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Sermon Notes

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God Warns All the Earth of the Wrath to Come

Isaiah 34:1-17

2012 is over, and apparently God did not communicate His purposes concerning the end of the world to the Mayans. That should not surprise us at all, for God has chosen to speak to the human race by means of His word, for the church is built upon the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone.

But the speculation comes from a deep-seated yearning to know what the future holds... where are we going? What's to become of us? Even deeper is the fear that the end that is coming will not be a good one... a doomsday scenario, in which some huge meteorite will hit the planet and make the human race instantly extinct... or, radiation blasts from solar flares will heat up the earth's core to such a level that life on earth will be impossible... or a gamma-ray burst from elsewhere in the galaxy which is the most powerful cosmic event could make its way to earth and end it all...or the destruction of the earth's ozone layer will produce rampant global warming that will lead to the extinction of the human race... or perhaps the eruption of a supervolcano which could disrupt the earth's climate enough to wipe out humanity

All of these scenarios basically come from physicists, cosmologists, and environmentalists generally operating in the atheistic framework they're accustomed to

But doomsday scenarios come from other realms as well: such as politics...

In my childhood, when the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union was in full swing, the doomsday scenarios were usually related to nuclear war; when I was an infant, the great terror was the Cuban Missile Crisis, and students were trained to crawl under their desks or run to nearby fallout shelters... in 1983, there was a powerful TV event called "The Day After" in which tensions between Warsaw Pact and NATO forces escalate to the point of a full nuclear exchange... the TV drama vividly portrayed what would happen to the citizens of two communities: Lawrence, Kansas, and Kansas City, Missouri. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, doomsday scenarios involving thermonuclear explosions usually relate to terrorists capturing weapons and detonating them

Beyond that come the fears of some kind of biological threat... like the bubonic plague... an airborne contagion that could wipe out the entire human race

Amazingly, some movies even depict ROBOTS rebelling against their creators, the human race, and waging war again us and winning, thus ending the human race

Now... all these doomsday scenarios (and many others) have been depicted in popular movies and TV programs... and the advent of computer graphics has made these depictions extremely realistic

They show that the human heart is fixated on the future, and in some sense terrified of it

What the popular depictions fail to account for is GOD in all of this... that the biggest threat to the continued unfolding of human history as we know it is the WRATH OF GOD

The fear of the future stems from the rebellion of man in the Garden of Eden... God swore that the penalty for eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was DEATH...

Adam ate, and heard the sound of God walking in the cool of the day

He was terrified, so he hid from God

God did not kill him immediately, but promised that he would die someday

And he cursed the ground because of Adam

God thus set the human race on a course of history in which a FUTURE RECKONING WITH DEATH was coming

And amazingly, the most detailed and comprehensive doomsday scenarios in human culture come from the Bible you carried to church today

The end of the story is the Book of Revelation... and that book is filled with the outpouring of the wrath of God both on mankind and on the surface of the earth

One judgment after another on the cosmos and on the earth are effected: the sun is darkened, the moon forbears to shine, the stars fall from the sky, the waters of the oceans, seas, rivers, lakes and ponds are all poisoned, the earth convulses and writhes in massive earthquakes... and, simply put, PEOPLE DIE

Chapter after chapter of this future is detailed for us in the Book of Revelation; but many of those themes are unfolded in Isaiah 34

In this chapter, we see in microcosm... in miniature... the themes of the future wrath of God on all nations unfolded

In the next chapter, Isaiah 35, the delights of the Redemed

I. God Summons the Nations to Listen (vs. 1)

Isaiah 34:1 Come near, you nations, and listen; pay attention, you peoples! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, the world, and all that comes out of it!

A. God's Grace to His Enemies

1. God doesn't have to warn them at all... He can merely wipe them out if He wants to
2. But God is gracious and wants the earth and all its inhabitants to know what is coming
3. Also, we can see the incredible patience of God; this warning came through Isaiah 27 centuries ago, and God is still waiting to pour out His wrath on His enemies on earth

B. Warning: In the Words of John the Baptist

Matthew 3:7-8 "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.

C. The Power of the Word of God... Hearing this Message is Sufficient to Save You

1. He calls on all nations to LISTEN... to PAY ATTENTION to His words
2. Faith comes by hearing God's word
3. It is enough warning, enough to save you from the coming wrath
4. Faith in Christ is the only refuge for what is to come

1 Thessalonians 1:10 Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

II. God's Wrath is On All Nations and Their Armies (vs. 2-4)

Isaiah 34:2-4 The LORD is angry with all nations; his wrath is upon all their armies. He will totally destroy them, he will give them over to slaughter. ³ Their slain will be thrown out, their dead bodies will send up a stench; the mountains will be soaked with their blood. ⁴ All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the sky rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree.

A. Two Shocking Issues Displayed in Isaiah 34

1. God as a God of Overpowering Wrath
2. The Fact that God is Angry with ALL NATIONS... NO EXCEPTIONS

B. The Lord is Angry with ALL NATIONS... His Wrath is Against All their Armies

1. Why? Biblical answer is clear:

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

2. Why no exceptions?? What nation on earth exists solely to advance the Kingdom of Jesus Christ? What nation on earth

3. Completely BLACK and WHITE...

Matthew 12:30 "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

John 11:51-52 Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, ⁵² and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one.

Ephesians 1:10 to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

C. Stark Pictures of Judgment and Wrath

1. Armies "given over to slaughter"

2. Literally "dedicated to destruction"

a. Like God told Joshua before the Battle of Jericho

Joshua 6:17-19 The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the LORD. ... keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. ¹⁹ All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the LORD and must go into his treasury."

b. Like God told Saul w.r.t. the Amalekites

1 Samuel 15:3 Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.

c. Vs. 3 is HORRIBLE... dead bodies giving up a STENCH; mountains SOAKED WITH BLOOD

D. Even the Host in the Heavens Will Come Under Judgment!

ESV Isaiah 34:4 All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall fall, as leaves fall from the vine, like leaves falling from the fig tree.

1. Possibly the stars in the heavens come to an end... “rot away” or “dissolved”
2. Or perhaps speaking of Satan’s heavenly armies

Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

3. God has spiritual enemies as well as human ones... and Isaiah 34 speaks in climactic tones of the final battle between God and all His foes
4. The heavens themselves are coming to an end, as God says elsewhere

Hebrews 1:11-12 They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. ¹² You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed.

III. Edom Represents God’s Human Enemies (vs. 5-15)

A. The Prophecy Goes from Universal to Focused

1. Verse 2 speaks of God’s wrath against ALL nations and ALL their armies
2. Verses 5-15 focus in particular on Edom

Isaiah 34:5 My sword has drunk its fill in the heavens; see, it descends in judgment on Edom, the people I have devoted to destruction.

Isaiah 34:6 The sword of the LORD is bathed in blood, it is covered with fat-- the blood of lambs and goats, fat from the kidneys of rams. For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in Edom.

[Bozrah is the capital city of Edom]

Isaiah 34:9 Edom's streams will be turned into pitch, her dust into burning sulfur; her land will become blazing pitch!

B. Edom as BOTH a Historical Nation and a Representative Nation

1. Edom was made up of the descendents of Esau
2. Esau was the twin brother of Jacob; in the Bible, a symbol of the REPROBATE individual; the godless man who sold his birthright for a bowl of stew
3. Many prophecies of judgment come against Edom

Amos 1:11-12 This is what the LORD says: "For three sins of Edom, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because he pursued his brother with a sword, stifling all compassion, because his anger raged continually and his fury flamed unchecked, ¹² I will send fire upon Teman that will consume the fortresses of Bozrah."

All of Obadiah is a prophecy against the pride of Edom... dwelling arrogantly in a lofty crag of rock, thinking they were completely safe... they had MOCKED Israel's misfortune when God sent nations to plunder Judah; they even waited at the crossroads and slaughtered Jewish fugitives as they were running for their lives

4. Most significant of all: Malachi 1

Malachi 1:2-4 "I have loved you," says the LORD. "But you ask, 'How have you loved us?' "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" the LORD says. "Yet I have loved Jacob, ³ but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals." ⁴ Edom may say, "Though we have been crushed, we will rebuild the ruins." But this is what the LORD Almighty says: "They may build, but I will demolish. They will be called the Wicked Land, a people always under the wrath of the LORD."

5. Quoted by Paul in Romans 9 to refer to REPROBATES, non-elect sinners whom the Lord has devoted to destruction

Romans 9:10-13 Not only that, but Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. ¹¹ Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad-- in order that God's purpose in election might stand: ¹² not by works but by him who calls-- she was told, "The older will serve the younger." ¹³ Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

6. So... here in Isaiah 34, Edom is a REAL NATION, facing REAL JUDGMENTS from God, but also a REPRESENTATIVE NATION standing in the place of all of God's HUMAN ENEMIES

C. The Sword of God's Wrath (vs. 5-7)

Isaiah 34:5-7 My sword has drunk its fill in the heavens; see, it descends in judgment on Edom, the people I have totally destroyed. ⁶ The sword of the LORD is bathed in blood, it is covered with fat-- the blood of lambs and goats, fat from the kidneys of rams. For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in Edom. ⁷ And the wild oxen will fall with them, the bull calves and the great bulls. Their land will be drenched with blood, and the dust will be soaked with fat.

1. The sword of the Lord first wins His battle in the heavenly realms, then DESCENDS in judgment on the earth as well

2. The sword of the Lord is His instrument of wrath and judgment

3. The sword of the Lord is saturated in blood... it is achieving a SACRIFICE for Him
 - a. Vs. 6 “bathed in blood, covered with fat”
 - b. The sacrifice language... like the blood of lambs and goats, fat from the kidneys of rams...
 - c. Vs. 7 “wild oxen”, “bull calves” “great bulls”
 - d. The land is drenched in the blood of these sacrifices
 - e. BUT it is clear the sacrifice offered to the Lord are human beings, slaughtered in His wrath
4. It is a GREAT SACRIFICE, a terrible slaughter... performed by the sword of God’s wrath

D. The “Day of the Lord” is to Uphold Zion’s Cause

Isaiah 34:8 For the LORD has a day of vengeance, a year of retribution, to uphold Zion's cause.

1. God is very patient with the “Edoms” of the world
2. He does not bring His wrath on the rebels immediately
3. As a matter of fact, the long delay makes people think God does not exist and that He will take no action
4. But nothing could be further from the truth... there is a “DAY OF THE LORD”, a day when God sets all accounts straight, a day when He takes vengeance for His oppressed people
5. The motive here: to “uphold Zion’s cause”
 - a. Zion represents Jerusalem... more specifically the “city of God” where God dwells with His people in fellowship
 - b. Here, it represents God’s suffering people, persecuted by these godless nations and their terrifying armies
 - c. The people of God are usually downtrodden, oppressed by the wicked nations, their wicked kings and their wicked armies
 - d. But God has a day of vengeance in which His people are vindicated by God’s intervention

Daniel 7:21-22 *As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.*

Daniel 7:23-26 *'The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. ²⁴ The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. ²⁵ He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time. ²⁶ "'But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever*

Revelation 6:9-11 *When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰ They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" ¹¹ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.*

Revelation 16:4-7 *The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. ⁵ Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say: "You are just in these judgments, you who are and who were, the Holy One, because you have so judged; ⁶ for they have shed the blood of your saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve." ⁷ And I heard the altar respond: "Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments."*

E. Edom's Judgments are a Foretaste of Hell (vs. 9-10)

Isaiah 34:9-10 *Edom's streams will be turned into pitch, her dust into burning sulfur; her land will become blazing pitch! ¹⁰ It will not be quenched night and day; its smoke will rise forever. From generation to generation it will lie desolate; no one will ever pass through it again.*

Revelation 14:10-11 *he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night*

[So, an unquenched fire, the smoke rising forever; the burning sulfur; the unresting aspect day and night... Isaiah 34 is reflected in Revelation 14, a clear picture of hell]

F. The Once Flourishing Land of Edom Turned into Chaos and Emptiness... a Picture of Complete Desolation and Rejection by the Lord (vs. 11-15)

Isaiah 34:11-15 The desert owl and screech owl will possess it; the great owl and the raven will nest there. God will stretch out over Edom the measuring line of chaos and the plumb line of desolation. ¹² Her nobles will have nothing there to be called a kingdom, all her princes will vanish away. ¹³ Thorns will overrun her citadels, nettles and brambles her strongholds. She will become a haunt for jackals, a home for owls. ¹⁴ Desert creatures will meet with hyenas, and wild goats will bleat to each other; there the night creatures will also repose and find for themselves places of rest. ¹⁵ The owl will nest there and lay eggs, she will hatch them, and care for her young under the shadow of her wings; there also the falcons will gather, each with its mate.

1. Many times Isaiah speaks of the judgments of God on a Gentile nation in this kind of natural language
2. The wild animals, the unclean animals will inhabit it, and no human will
3. No human will even pass through it
4. (vs. 11) God's CAREFUL MEASURING work: God stretches out a measuring line of CHAOS and the plumb line of DESOLATION
 - a. The Hebrew words are the same as in Genesis 1:2

Genesis 1:2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep

God then step by step brings order out of chaos in the six days of creation

- b. The idea is the God is reversing their creation orderliness
- c. The measuring line and plumb line language mean this is a careful work by God, not a random act of mindless passion on His part
5. (Vs 12) Nobles and princes have nothing left in the land and themselves will vanish away; the land is left TOTALL DESOLATE
6. (vs. 13) briers and thorns come back into Isaiah's prophecy... He uses this image frequently to speak of the curse of God on the land

Vs. 13 Thorns will overrun her citadels, nettles and brambles her strongholds.

7. (vs. 13-15) Desert creatures will take over and live there undisturbed from generation to generation
- G. Summary: Edom represents not merely one nation of God's enemies but ALL nations ultimately; nations that fought against the people of God and persecuted them and opposed God's glory in this world; God will judge them completely, in

effect speaking them out of orderly, created existence; their land will become desolate, because all of them will be dead.

IV. God's "Book" is Written, and Every Line Shall Be Fulfilled (vs. 16-17)

Isaiah 34:16-17 Look in the scroll of the LORD and read: None of these will be missing, not one will lack her mate. For it is his mouth that has given the order, and his Spirit will gather them together. ¹⁷ He allots their portions; his hand distributes them by measure. They will possess it forever and dwell there from generation to generation.

A. God's "Scroll" = His Sovereign Plan

1. God has a carefully determined plan that covers all details
2. The "scroll" represents that sovereign plan, determined before the foundation of the world

Psalm 139:16 All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

3. Closely connected with the "scroll" representing the plan is the sovereign power of God to carry it out through His Spirit:

For it is his mouth that has given the order, and his Spirit will gather them together. ¹⁷ He allots their portions; his hand distributes them by measure.

4. In Isaiah 14, it is "plan" + "hand" = final end

Isaiah 14:26-27 This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. ²⁷ For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?

B. Immediate Context: The Wild Animals of vss. 13-15

1. The "scroll" has written out that the wild animals will possess Edom's previously allotted land
2. Furthermore, the land is allotted to the animals from that time on till the end... from that time on from generation to generation
3. He makes it a wasteland that no one will want to dwell in but these wild animals

C. Big Picture: All the Details of Human History Were Written in God's Book Before One of them Came to Be

1. God had allotted that land to the descendents of Esau and forbidden the Jews to violate it

Deuteronomy 2:2-5 *Then the LORD said to me, ... Give the people these orders: 'You are about to pass through the territory of your brothers the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir. They will be afraid of you, but be very careful. ⁵ Do not provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land, not even enough to put your foot on. I have given Esau the hill country of Seir as his own.*

2. But now, because of Edom's sin, He takes it away forever and gives it to the animals
3. Paul made this plain

Acts 17:26 *From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.*

But the larger issue is: ALL nations (not just Edom) are under God's wrath, and will come to the same end!!

V. How Isaiah 34 Prepares Us for the Second Coming of Christ

- A. Many Aspects of Isaiah 34 are Repeated In Connection with the Second Coming of Christ and the End of the World
- B. The Signs in the Heavens... the "Falling of the Stars"

Matthew 24:29-31 *"Immediately after the distress of those days "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken." ³⁰ "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.*

2 Peter 3:10 *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.*

2 Peter 3:12 *That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.*

- C. Revelation 6 in Particular

Revelation 6:12-17 *I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, ¹³ and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop*

from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. ¹⁴ The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. ¹⁵ Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶ They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷ For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

D. The Gathering of the Kings of the Earth and their Armies for Slaughter

1. Revelation 12: War in the heavens, Satan cast down
2. Revelation 13: The Dragon stands by the shore of the sea and summons the "Beast" (Antichrist) to rule over the nations and wage war against the people of God
3. Revelation 17: The sub-rulers (the ten kings) assemble to give their power to the one ruler (the Antichrist)

Revelation 17:13-14 [The ten kings] have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴ They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings-- and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.

4. Revelation 19: the kings of the earth take their stand against Christ and the armies of heaven; He slaughters them all with the sword coming out of His mouth

Revelation 19:19-21 Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. ²⁰ But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. ²¹ The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

E. Deeper Issue: Deliverance from Hell

1. Isaiah 34 depicts the horrors of God's wrath, the terrors of hell
2. It is a terrifying thing to have God as your enemy, the sword of His wrath coming after you
3. Many struggle with this picture of God
 - a. They wonder how can a God who condemns people to an eternity in hell be morally righteous?

- b. They wonder if such a God is not more of a monster than One worthy of eternal praise
- c. They stumble badly over the doctrine of God's wrath, and are utterly repulsed
- d. BUT they forget several things
 - i) First, the perfection of God's holiness... that

1 John 1:5 God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

Therefore, God cannot tolerate evil; for Him to have a mild or passive reaction to evil would make Him evil

- ii) Second, that all sin is directly an affront to His glory... and sin is always measured in proportion to what is owed or appropriate to the person... the greater the person's position, the more significant the sin; thus a sin against a parent is more significant than the exact same sin against a total stranger
- iii) Third, that Christ Himself drank the cup of God's wrath for us, standing in our place; the "sword of the Lord's wrath" was bathed in HIS blood so that we could escape

F. Thus... Christ is the ONLY ESCAPE from the Wrath of God Expressed in Hell

G. This is the GOSPEL:

Romans 3:23-25 all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.

VI. Applications

A. Come to Christ!!!

1. We should fear the God that is displayed in this chapter
2. That fear should be the beginning of wisdom
3. The end of wisdom is CHRIST... the one who ALONE can rescue us from the coming wrath

B. Understand the Universality of God's Wrath Against All Nations

1. There is not a single nation on earth that does its business for the glory of God

2. There is not a single nation on earth that does not pursue a worldly agenda of pursuing power, possessions, pleasures, personal glory
3. All nations are in some way serving Satan as they pursue these things
4. Thus all nations are under the wrath of God
5. That includes their armies
 - a. When Hitler's Nazi army was facing off against Stalin's Soviet Army, both armies were under the wrath of God... no matter who won this or that battle

C. What About Patriotism? What About Nationalism? What is the Proper Level of Love for and Commitment to Our Own Nation?

1. This brings a reasonable question about our loyalty to the United States of America
2. Surely, you may say, the USA is exempt from this statement?
3. But why would it be?
 - a. It is very possible that many politicians and political appointees and public servants are genuine Christians who are like Daniel: godly advisors to the king of Babylon, faithfully carrying out their ministries for God's glory
 - b. BUT Daniel was not able to set policy... merely to influence it
 - c. It may also be that many soldiers or sailors or airmen or Marines are genuine Christians who are seeking to serve in a way that glorifies Christ
 - d. They can act like salt in a very corrupt place and light in a very dark place
 - e. BUT not every mission they go on or battle they fight or war they seek to win is necessarily set out by godly policy makers for the glory of God and of His Christ
4. Nationalism and even patriotism can be forms of idolatry...
 - a. Natural affections are reasonable: we should love our native land
 - b. BUT many forms of idolatry come from taking a reasonable natural affection and pushing it beyond God-ordained boundaries
 - c. Truly our citizenship is not ultimately USA... but heaven, the city that is to come!!

Philippians 3:20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ

Hebrews 11:13-16 And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. ¹⁴ People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ Instead, they were longing for a better country-- a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

- d. We should be grateful for the freedoms we have here in America, and thankful for the sacrifices that have been made to give them; we should seek to preserve them and use them for the glory of God; but realize, America is not and never has been a truly Christian nation... rather it is a MIXTURE... and in heaven, there will be NO MIXTURE

D. Understand the Future As Revealed in Isaiah 34 and Revelation

1. The world will go from bad to worse, with ever-increasing persecution against believers
2. Satan will continue to dominate nations and afflict God's people
3. The Antichrist will come, as 1 John 2, 2 Thessalonians 2, and Revelation 13 predict
4. He will arrogantly seek to take God's place; and (according to Daniel 7) will wage war successfully against God's people
5. The armies of his wicked world-wide rule will be gathered together against God's people, and against Christ
6. Christ will come back and crush that army, slaughtering those soldiers with the sword coming from His mouth
7. The heavens will disappear with a roar and the stars will fall from heaven like figs from a fig tree
8. The new heavens and new earth will take the place of the old one

E.